

Duxbury skateboard park takes off

Officials pleased with new park

By Christopher Sealey
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DUXBURY — As the Duxbury skateboard park prepares to celebrate its one year anniversary this fall, it seems as though the project has done wonders for local skateboarders and the community.

The park has given kids an area to practice their skateboarding skills and, according to Duxbury Police Lt. Donald Sjostedt, there have been far fewer instances of business owners complaining of skateboarders on their property.

"The calls from local businesses have decreased an awful lot," said Sjostedt. "There's much less of a problem between businesses and skateboarders than there used to be."

Local skateboarder Phil Langlois, 14, is happy that kids now have a place to skate free of harassment. "I'm really glad we have the park to go to," said Langlois. "For a while there was no place to skate except on the streets near businesses, and the owners were getting mad."

The skateboarding problems in town, particularly near Hall's Corner, were not only an annoyance to store proprietors, but also developed into a hazardous situation, according to Sjostedt. "Hall's Corner was a more dangerous situation for everyone, particularly with the skateboarders



Staff photo/Christopher Sealey

Skateboard park — Most people are happy with Duxbury's skateboard park, which will be a year old in October.

frequently riding through traffic," he said. "In retrospect, I think the skateboard park was a good idea and a safer alternative."

The park was built late last October as a collaborative effort between the town and local youths. The total cost of the project neared \$15,000, but much of the labor and funding was donated and raised by the skateboarders and their supporters.

Duxbury recreation director Gordon Cushing cites the skateboard park as a shining example of citizens and town officials cooperating to achieve a common goal. "This project was unique in that a lot of people got together to get something done," Cushing said.

While the town did donate the land, skateboarders first had to agree to a set of stringent safety rules governing park use and requiring helmets for all skaters. Town manager Rocco Longo was particularly concerned with the helmet rule.

It appears skaters have complied with safety rules, but Cushing said there have been some minor problems. "If there is a downside to the skateboard park project, it has been the few difficulties we have had with some kids who do not want to follow the safety equipment rules," said Cushing. "However, most kids do follow the rules, and it's getting better all the time."

While the skateboard park has

remained popular among local youths, supporters are having trouble maintaining the physical condition of the park. Many of the park's skateboarding obstacles have worn down, and skaters are looking to repair and maintain the facilities themselves, since they have received little help from the town.

"We're looking to do some basic repairs and get simple things like trash barrels and a water fountain, but we are faced with extensive red tape and little town support," said parent Paul Duggan, who worked on the park. "Rocco was very supportive to get this off the ground, and now he is saying that we must keep it going ourselves."

Parents of skateboarders and the skaters themselves attribute a lack of continued town support to the "alternative" nature of the skateboarding subculture and the fact that skateboarding is not yet a mainstream sport.

"People think these kids are all misfits and they want to drop them in one place and forget about them," said Duggan. "If you support Little League, why can't you support local skateboarders?"

In an effort to prevent the skateboard park from vanishing, skaters and their supporters are seeking assistance from parents who would be willing to help supervise and maintain the area.

Eventually, they hope to incorporate into a non-profit organization for local skateboarders. Anyone interested in helping may contact the Duggans at 837-6690.

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